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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNMIK](#) [UN](#) [OSCE](#) [YI](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPANISH DISAPPOINTED ON KOSOVO

REF: A. STATE 14284

[1](#)B. STATE 13716

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Spanish Political Director Rafael Dezcallar told Charge that Spain is disappointed that the U.S. did not agree to delay the timing of Kosovo's independence until after the Spanish elections. He said that Spain has not yet decided how it will respond in Brussels after the UDI, but that the U.S. decision would have consequences. He expressed certainty that Kosovar independence would be an issue in the Spanish elections. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge Llorens met with Spanish political director Rafael Dezcallar February 13 to discuss the impending announcement of Kosovar independence and efforts by Serbia to invoke the Berlin Mechanism in the OSCE (reftels). The Charge noted that Kosovo's independence is going forward, and that Washington is conscious of the discomfort for the GOS given its election cycle. Nevertheless, further delay served no purpose other than increasing the chance of instability in the Balkans. Charge expressed his personal view that this would not have an impact on the Spanish elections, and he noted that Kosovo is a unique case that would not set a precedent for other territorial disputes. The Charge expressed concern about Serbian attempts to raise the issue in the OSCE, emphasizing that it was not the appropriate place for discussion on Kosovo. He expressed concern about Serbian machinations to invoke the Berlin Mechanism in the OSCE. The United States strongly opposed any such effort to invoke the Berlin mechanism because it would imply that Kosovo's independence violated the Helsinki Final Act, which is not credible. The Charge noted that Serbia had the right to discuss the issue in the Permanent Council, but that OSCE considerations should not go beyond that. Dezcallar took this on board but did not offer a response.

[1](#)3. (C) Dezcallar said he hoped Charge was right about the elections but expressed certainty that Kosovo would have a domestic political impact in Spain. Dezcallar said that he had spoken with Assistant Secretary Fried two days ago and had expressed disappointment over the U.S. decision not to support the Spanish request to postpone Kosovo's independence until after Spain's March 9 elections. He said that Spain is not a small EU country like Slovakia or Cyprus and that the U.S. decision would have consequences in Brussels. He also noted the GOS conviction that such a decision would not have gone forward had it been the UK, France or Germany requesting a delay. He recalled that more than half of the EU had been in favor of a delay in January, but that the decision of the Quint, and more specifically the U.S., had made somewhat of a parody of EU unity. Dezcallar said that the GOS regrets that the U.S. chose not to listen to Spain's concerns, despite the

considerable efforts by the GOS to improve the bilateral relationship with Washington. He added that President Zapatero and his political team are paying close attention to Kosovo, and Spanish policy will be decided at that level. He speculated that Spain would not be able to support EU consensus on welcoming Kosovo at next week's GAERC and would have to evaluate its support of the ESDP mission, which he said now would have a "doubtful" legal basis.

14. (C) COMMENT: Dezcallar did not respond to Charge's markers about the Berlin Mechanism, instead focusing on GOS disappointment and how Spain might react in the EU, as well as the domestic angle. Despite coinciding with the GOS in opposition to a UDI, the Partido Popular will ensure that Kosovo is a topic of discussion in the Spanish elections, regardless of timing. The PP will use GOS inability to secure a delay to bolster its argument that the Zapatero government has frittered away Spain's foreign policy influence, in effect asking, "How could the government let this happen?" Had Spain secured a delay, the PP would have criticized such a move as the most cynical of electoral maneuvers - "They couldn't stop it, so they're trying to sweep it under the rug until after the elections... This never would have happened under Aznar." The issue itself is not likely to resonate with many middle class voters, but it is another arrow in the PP quiver, which worries the GOS in the midst of a very tough electoral campaign. END COMMENT.
LLORENS